

REMARKS

This Amendment is being filed concurrently with a Request for Continued Examination (RCE). Claims 12, 13, 15-20, 22-26, 28-38, 40, 41 and 43-46 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 22 and 46 are amended and claims 14 and 42 are canceled. No new matter is added. In view of at least the following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of claims 15-20, 28, 38, 40, 44 and 45, and the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 33, 34 and 37.

Claims 12, 13, 22, 23, 25, 29-32 and 46 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0118374 to Eun et al. ("Eun"); claims 14, 26, 36, and 41-43 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Eun in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,137,796 to Takiguchi et al. ("Takiguchi"); and claims 24 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Eun in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,594,462 to Ishii et al. ("Ishii"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Eun fails to disclose or suggest a developing device that includes "a first means that prevents a weight of the developing agent contained in the developing agent container from directly acting in a vertical direction on an entirety of the supply device," as recited in independent claim 12. The Office Action alleges that Eun discloses a developing device including toner storage 118 which includes a protruding section shown between labels 122 and 124. The Office Action further alleges that this protruding portion prevents a weight of the developing agent from acting in a vertical direction on an entirety of supply roller 126. See Office Action at page 2.

However, Eun does not disclose a developing device including a means that prevents the weight of the developing agent from acting in a vertical direction on an entirety of the supply device, because as can be seen in Figs. 3-5 of Eun, there is a substantial portion of supply

roller 126 that would be exposed directly to the weight of the developer in the vertical direction. That is, there is no structure in Eun's device to prevent the weight of the developer from acting on supply roller 126, at least over a substantial part of the upper surface of supply roller 126. The protruding portion cited in the Office Action only extends over a small portion of roller 126. Thus, for at least this reason, independent claim 12 is patentable over Eun.

Independent claim 22 recites a developing device that includes "a first wall that is disposed between the developing agent container and the supply device and covers the entirety of an upper portion of the supply device." Here also, the wall portion in Eun does not cover an entirety of the upper portion of the supply device because a substantial portion of the upper surface of supply roller 126 will be directly exposed to the full weight of the toner. Thus, for at least this reason, independent claim 22 is patentable over the applied references.

Claims 13, 24-26, 29-32, 35, 36, 41 and 46 depend from one of independent claims 12 and 22 and are therefore also patentable over the applied references for at least the reasons enumerated above, as well as for the additional features they recite. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Request for Continued Examination (RCE)

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